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NEWS RELEASE

***Los Lagartos* Returns to San Jacinto Plaza**

EL PASO, Texas – *Los Lagartos* is back to its place as the focal point of San Jacinto Plaza.

The reinstallation of the sculpture – designed for San Jacinto Plaza by nationally celebrated El Paso artist Luis Jimenez – is among the final components of the reconstruction of the plaza. The reinstallation took place today.

The canopy at the plaza will now be able to be completed now that the sculpture is in place. Other remaining projects include completing the café and installing remaining light fixtures, pavers under the canopy, reflective pool tile, and landscaping and pavers along Oregon street. The sculpture will remain wrapped and protected during the completion of construction work at the plaza.

Reconstruction of San Jacinto Plaza was approved as part of the 2012 Quality of Life Bonds. When it is complete, San Jacinto Plaza will be a more open interactive place for downtown visitors and workers to relax during the day. Renovations an interactive water feature or "splash pad," public surfaces for games (chess tables, ping pong tables and huacha court), a full-service café as well as benches, sidewalks and enhanced landscaping.

Los Lagartos (The Alligators) is a playful grouping paying homage to the live alligators that were once kept in a specially gated artificial lagoon in the middle of San Jacinto Plaza. Moved to the El Paso Zoo in the late 1950s, the alligators were a favorite among many El Pasoans, including the young Jimenez who often visited on Saturday afternoons. It was first installed in San Jacinto Plaza in 1993.

The sculpture was temporarily removed from the Plaza to have extensive conservation work completed that recaptured the original beauty of this sculpture. The materials Jimenez used in his sculptures provided a unique opportunity during its conservation. McKay Lodge Art Conservation Laboratory Inc. worked with the nation's premier automotive paint company, PPG, Inc., on new techniques that will protect the *Los Lagartos* from exposure to the sun and extreme heat.

About the artist

Jimenez, is best known for large-scale fiberglass sculptures. The son of an illegal immigrant, Jimenez's work often gravitates to the political—embracing Southwestern imagery, Chicano themes and questioning long-held beliefs about American history, power and entitlement. Although El Paso serves as one of the largest repositories of his work, Jimenez's art can be found in collections throughout the United States, most prominently installed outside the Smithsonian Museum of American Art/National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C. Jimenez passed away in 2006.

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